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Contemporary American craft and industrial unionism in theory and practice.

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CRAFT AND INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

by

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INTRODUCTION

Many vast social changes are sweeping across America and the world. Not the least of these is the intra-labor conflict. It is because this latter movement is playing such an important part in the social destinies of people that this study is made.

It is an attempt to clarify the issues existing between the two ideologies of labor; industrial and craft unionism.

To study the theory and practice of these opposing labor movements one must seek out the personalities, the organizations, the philosophies, and the strifes involved between them.

This thesis seeks to discover just what the theory and practice of contemporary labor is. To do so it has been necessary to rely on the few books available in the field, and upon the pamphlets issued by the opposing forces, news items from the press, letters from the leaders of the Committee for Industrial Organization and the American Federation of Labor, and other contemporary mediums of information.

The past history of the Federation was also a needed source; here one discovers the rise of the modern problem of industrial unionism. Out of much struggle a definite pattern is taking shape; a pattern expressing the trend labor is taking in the social scheme. This thesis attempts to catch, articulate, and show a bit of this present trend in the theory and practice of the industrial and the craft union ideologies.

CHAPTER I

THE METAMORPHISES FROM OLD TO NEW IN THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT

To think of the modern labor movement in the United States is to become conscious immediately of two figures, Mr. John L. Lewis and his former commander, Mr. William Green of the American Federation of Labor. They are both saints to those who have sainted them and devils to them who oppose them, but in their own estimations they are defenders of Labor's faith against any and all subversive influences. Lewis, as far as Green is concerned, is a "damned red". Lewis, on the other hand, holds his former colleague in similar repute, for Green is black to Lewis' crowd of the Committee for Industrial Organization. The American Federation of Labor is a fascist apology. So goes the quarrel between two vital personalities in the labor movement.

But these two men are only the leaders of two great expressions of modern labor. Their names are important because they lead, or are led, as the case may be, by forces far more important historically than they. It is the struggle of the industrial masses to solve a problem of war strategy on the economic front. Big business is organized superbly. It has its Chambers of Commerce, its Manufacturer Associations, and its Vigilante Committees. Then, too, there are strong espionage

organizations that are right arms to high finance. One does not have to read deep into the story of labor and industry to be convinced that they are in a life and death struggle for power, economic prestige, and social control. It has always been so, but now an industrial crisis is faced which is far more pertinent and dangerous than has had to be faced for many a year. Time will show it to be a great historical crisis.

As a result of this struggle various tendencies are discovered. Business is divided in its attitudes. Progressive business men are bitterly opposed by reactionaries, even hated, for their liberal attitude toward organized labor. Labor itself is vitally divided, as before mentioned, because of liberal and conservative views of organization. Back and forth words fly, print flows, and wrenches and tear gas fill the air. Between the cross-fire of opposing forces it is well to try, as a correspondent of a war might do, to ascertain the forces, their importance, and the direction in which further advances along Labor's front may be made.

First of all, there is a civil war in Labor's ranks. The American Federation of Labor, meeting in convention in San Francisco, discovered heresy had infected some of its membership and leaders, too. A few progressive individuals in the 1934 Convention were bold enough to suggest a serious labor campaign along industrial lines. It was their contention that in mass-production industries craft unions were powerless to

wage economic war against the modern corporation. An automobile plant could shift its assembly and production from one plant to another in case of trouble with a craft union, and thus circumvent defeat at the hands of its opponents. Then, too, critics pointed out the fact that millions of unskilled men could not be well organized along craft lines. This certainly was evident on the basis of available figures. The American Federation of Labor was merely the aristocracy of labor. There was evidence to support the contention that the leaders of the Federation were marking time and drawing salaries without even attempting to carry forward better conditions to the masses. However, underneath the leadership a movement was already taking form among the rank and file. They knew that they ought to be organized, but were simply waiting for guidance. Green, Frey, Woll, and Hutcheson were all aware of the threat. These leaders of the American Federation of Labor naturally put pressure upon the representatives of the 1934 Convention, and silenced the " radicals ".

But their efforts proved to be abortive, for the birth of the new organization was forced in 1935 in Washington. November was an anxious month for the mid-wives, Sidney Hillman and David Dubinsky of the needle trade unions. These organizations were for years an anachronism within the Federation, for they were already industrially organized. The father of the Committee for Industrial Organization was Mr. Lewis who

headed the United Mine Workers which was another industrial union within Mr. Green's Federation. The " Bastard " was born, not an emaciated weakling as prophesied by the conservative chiefs of the older organization, but a healthy robust child with a promise of keeping his father, Mr. Lewis, busy in the effort to prevent upsetting the crib, the National Capitol, and the Democratic Party. Never in American history has a labor organization been so militant, and, at the same time, so successful. With the great unions already mentioned as a nucleus, the organization of the masses in technologically automatized industry began.

The Federation was an old organization which had long since lost its fight. It had become institutionalized. Its leadership held excellent positions which kept them as " Capitalists " in their own right. They were reluctant to attempt anything which might be disadvantageous to their own economic interests. Apathy became a general attitude. A labor convention became a meeting in which many fine resolutions were passed, but which no one intended doing anything about; especially if action might hurt the leader's position or pocket-book.

In all honesty, it must be admitted that these men believed in the craft union idea. They felt that the older method of organization was the most efficient way to express Labor's power. The idea was excellent in early American

industry, and they felt it still had its good points today. It is not easy to surrender labor ideology of a lifetime simply because a new society is emerging. The old leaders all were for saving the capitalistic system, their own salaries, and the American Federation of Labor. This was no time to let the Committee for Industrial Organization turn the country "red".

Being organized along craft lines all strikes of the Federation took on an aspect of guerilla warfare. Every fight was localized; consequently, they never, or rarely, even if defeated threatened the life of the Federation as a whole. If the strike was victorious, well and good, if it proved a failure, then the hierarchy could pull out, and let the local leaders down. It wouldn't affect them dangerously because there were always enough dues-paying members to keep the staff adequately paid. More and more the older organization became docile and useless to the men who needed a militant leadership.

The Committee was now bringing whole industries together as units. Men were no longer waging a minor skirmish, but were in an industrial war. No one could sit idly by and say, "Well we're not in it, let the machinists do what they can". All crafts were uniting to win a major campaign. Every defeat was significant now, and every victory imperative. Thus it was that militancy was returning to American unionism.

This thesis is a study of this contemporary scene. It

seeks to show the theory and practice of the craft and the industrial unions.

CHAPTER II

TWO CONTENDING PERSONALITIES IN AMERICAN LABOR

I. WILLIAM GREEN, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

The parentage of William Green, like that of John L. Lewis was Welsh. Hugh Green, the father, had left the English mines to settle with his Welsh wife in Coshocton, Ohio. Here in this mining community William Green was born on March third, 1873.

William's early ambition was to be a minister, but the family income seemed to be inadequate. Therefore, at sixteen he took his place along with other old and young men in the mines. There was here, as elsewhere in the mining districts, a strong United Mine Workers' union. The church and the union were the social centers of much activity. Consequently, young Green rubbed elbows with, not only religionists, but anarchists, socialists, and other radical individuals. His preference, though, was for Sunday School work. He did not care to meddle with social theories. So it was that he taught Sunday School, and shied away from too much radicalism. When he later sought to develop his leadership in the union any radical temperament that he may have had was constantly being checked by his conservative religious background.

At twenty-one Green was still in the mines. He had now married , and was seriously endeavoring to better himself. He was now seeking official work in the union. In 1900 he received his first position as a labor leader when he was appointed a sub-district president of the United Mine Workers of America. From this time on, he never again entered the mines as a worker but only as an organizer or union official. In 1906 he had risen to the presidency of the Ohio State district, and his future was assured.

It was not long before his ability to speak and voice opinions was leading him into the political arena. In 1912 he was elected delegate at large to the Democratic Convention, and in the following year he was elected to the State Senate.

His conservative attitude made him a leader of the party, especially of the administration men; and he was often used because of his oratory to swing others into line at the conclusion of important debates. Even slightly progressive labor legislation was often put through the State Senate by him in the smoothest manner. His sleek and diplomatic activity made him a powerful democratic floor leader. He knew just how much he could get, and, furthermore, how to get it. Under his able guidance the miners received considerable legislative help. Among the laws passed was one forcing the owners and operators to pay the miners for the coal which was weighed before it was screened. Thus he saved for the workers a large part of their

formerly lost tonnage.

When the International Workers of the World opened up their drive in the rubber industry, Green was instrumental in helping to defeat them, and thus saved the workers from revolution. (1) Yet in the minds of others he saved them from wage increases and better labor conditions. William Green was a State Senator who could be depended upon to prevent radical changes of subversive activities from disrupting government, even at the expense of labor.

In 1913 he was elected secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers. This ended his political career, and started him on his way to the presidency of the American Federation of Labor. While he was holding his newly earned position in his office at Indianapolis an opening occurred in the executive council of the Federation. Gompers offered this seventh vice-presidency to White, head of the United Mine Workers. He refused it.

Finally, Gompers appointed another man to the position, but desiring representation for the United Mine Workers on the council, he offered the eighth vice-presidency to Green, who accepted it eagerly.

1 Mary Heaton Vorce, *Labor's New Millions* (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938), p. 7

Through death or otherwise, Green gradually moved up in order of seniority until he was in third place. This was in 1924. From then on progress was rapid. His quiet, careful manner and his cautious attitudes made him a safe member in the council. He never really conflicted with superiors in any serious manner. He was an average citizen in an important position. He carried with him the prestige of nice family, was a member of the Elks and the Odd Fellows, and otherwise expressed himself in a most unobtrusive way.

When Green was appointed to fill Gompers's place many of the union members, even the leaders, were surprised if not displeased, but the press was delighted. The reactionary press gave out an especially enthusiastic report of the new era for labor. (2) They saw in him one who would work with employers and not against them. Green responded to this enthusiasm by mouthing smooth words of cooperation between labor and capital. In so many words he told the public he would be a good leader.

He promised upon assuming the mantle of Gompers that he would strive to reflect the same spirit his former chief had manifested. Anything which went contrary to the principles promulgated by Gompers would be fought. Anything which supported the deceased leader's viewpoint he would continue to support. Green, the public must know, would be safe.

With such an apathetic attitude it is not a wonder that labor's ranks rapidly thinned. This was especially true during the depression years. The American Federation of Labor's membership went down from 2,865,799 in 1924 to 2,126,796 in 1933. The previous four years (1920 to 1924) the Federation had lost almost two million members. (3) Even during the boom years from 1926 to 1929 labor suffered decimation in its membership. Green was no man for a struggle. When Labor needed a militant guide at the head of the Federation it did not have one. Any drastic or progressive action taken was started under the impetus of local union members or leaders. The initiative was almost invariably from the bottom and not from the top. Local leaders had to depend upon themselves. They dared not rely upon Green or the Federation.

It was out of this apathetic situation that the workers themselves arose to force action within the Federation itself. Soon an open conflict existed between the craft ideal as represented by President Green and the industrial union ideal as represented by such men as John L. Lewis.

The result of this conflict has further portrayed the character of Green. It is not necessary, therefore, to enlarge upon those portions of his personality which are treated in the

3 Ibid., pp. 18, 19.

controversy as described elsewhere in this thesis. Green's name is synonymous with " old line tactics "; Lewis' name with the newer line of approach.

II. JOHN L. LEWIS, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

The American scene called Europeans to a land where there was plenty of work, and every man had a chance to make a living. At least the industrialists painted this kind of a picture. Among those attracted to the United States was Thomas Lewis, a Welsh miner. He came to Lucas, Iowa, sometime before 1880. It was in this year, shortly after they had established their home in America, that his son, John Llewellyn Lewis, was born.

The Lewis family was large which made it difficult for them to eke out a living; the pits offered little money but much work. But the father was a militant worker and sought protection for his economic interests in the ranks of labor. It was not long before he became affiliated with the Knights of Labor. As a result of a strike he was placed on the company black list, and had to leave Lucas to seek employment elsewhere. Work was difficult to find, for he was constantly being checked by his employers against the black list. Finally, he had to take any kind of employment he could find.

When John was a boy he had the usual experiences of a

miner's son. He was educated in the elementary schools; entered the mines at twelve; played ball with his companions, and had his share of fights. In one way, however, he was exceptional. He could speak very well, and sought opportunities to display his forensic abilities whenever the occasion presented itself. He also had a bump of curiosity in him which led to his reading and seeking new knowledge and experience. Among the things he read were the Bible and Shakespeare's works; books which a young school teacher suggested to him.

When he was twenty-one he asserted his maturity by leaving Lucas and seeking his fortune elsewhere. Mining was the one thing he knew, and invariably he ended up in the pits, working at the job he could never really care for. After much shifting about he finally returned to Lucas.

In 1907 he married the school teacher who had so ably started him along lines of learning. She was to be a great help to him all through his rise in the labor movement. It was she, more than anyone else, who helped him to polish up his speech and to develop his challenging methods of address.

In 1906 he was elected as a union delegate, and had his first taste of power in labor's organization. Whereas he found it difficult to get out of the pits by other means, he saw here a way of achievement and escape. In 1909 he moved to Panama, Illinois, and began his serious effort to rise in the labor movement. He was soon elected president of the

local United Mine Workers Union, and in a few more months he was advanced to the position of the state legislative agent for the union. He proved to be very successful in gaining safety laws for the miners.

He became an unusually effective speaker, and could hold the legislators spellbound by his oratory. His use of bombastic utterances and sharp phrases commanded attention. Furthermore, he took himself and his job seriously. John L. Lewis had a way of gaining his point.

It is easy to see why Gompers saw in Lewis an excellent field representative for the American Federation of Labor. Here was an emissary who could speak with power. So it was that Gompers appointed him, and sent him into all parts of the country organizing or otherwise representing the president of the American Federation of Labor. His appearance was known before many legislatures and before the national Congress. Wherever labor needed a strong voice John L. Lewis was apt to be the speaker. He had a way of making himself heard.

In 1916 he was appointed president pro tem of the United Mine Workers Convention. The president of the miners, John P. White, appointed him at this time chief statistician, a position which Lewis welcomed, for he wanted to get back into his own union, for he felt his future more secure there.

Through it he thought he could get ahead, and later have power in the Federation itself. His judgement has been

validated. This is evident in his later advancements.

This union was already an industrial organization, and the most powerful single unit in the Federation. At the close of the World War the miners were still under the restrictions laid down by the Federal Fuel Administration which was organized as a war necessity. The miners were discontented, and by the fall of 1919 they were ready for action. They voted to walk out of the pits on November first, 1919. This they did 411,000 strong.

Lewis was at first opposed to the strike, but when he found the men so strongly for it he was forced to give it his support. The government announced its position as absolutely opposed to it. Later the Attorney-general obtained a permanent injunction against the strike, and gave the miners until November eleventh, to be back in the mines. John L. Lewis, with the advice of his union leaders, capitulated. He announced to the men that they should go back to the mines as the government directed.

This defeat which Lewis later claimed as a victory made it hard sailing for him. It required much bluffing and domineering at the 1920 Convention of the United Mine Workers of America, but he finally managed to retain control. In fact, he was elected president. The amount of chicanery which may have occurred in this election is hard to know. He was elected to this high office, not by direct ballot in the convention,

but by mailed ballots after the convention. Consequently, the ballots were counted at union headquarters by his own friends.

Lewis was not always democratic in his actions. He often expelled oppositional leaders illegally, or forced them out by other arrogant means. His ability to compromise was also no honor to him. Often, in fact more often than not, he gave much more to the employer than to the worker. (4) The result of such retreating and arrogance was a big factor in the demoralization of the United Mine Workers of America. In the twelve years Lewis was president its membership dropped approximately four hundred thousand to about one hundred and fifty thousand. The operators were more secure, and the miners infinitely weaker in 1932 than in 1924 which was the unions peak year. (5)

One can hardly blame Lewis for all this disintegration. He was strongly opposed by the government which supported the anti-union movement. Economic conditions the world over put the miners in a poor bargaining position. There was a serious drop in foreign demands upon them, as well as, a diminished requirement in home consumption. The miners almost had to take what the employers were willing to give. Thousands upon thousands of workers were without employment in the industry with the

4 Bruce Minton and John Stuart, Men Who Lead Labor (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1937, p. 95

5 Ibid,, pp. 95, 96.

result that many were willing sabotage the labor movement in the hope of securing a pittance for themselves and their families. The result was a violation of union contracts all around. The employers and the workers did much as they pleased.

Lewis himself was floundering about for a diplomatic and strategic position in the dilemma. One year he opposed government regulation while in another year he favored it. He was never quite certain whether legislative pressure was the best method of obtaining labor's demands, or whether it was better to take part in direct political action. Again, he thought direct negotiations with the employer were possibly the proper means of procedure. So it was that he vacillated back and forth from one emphasis and program to another. By 1933 he had come to a point where he was ready to definitely commit himself to government regulation. Out of the disasters of the past decade he was convinced that such a course was the only way to save the workers.

At this point the biographical sketch of the key personality in the contemporary American labor picture is concluded. The thesis treats more specifically the actual rise of industrial unionism and its methods. Lewis, suffice it to write, is a part of this great movement, and consequently will receive further treatment in the consideration given industrial unions and their clash with the craft union ideology.

CHAPTER III

TWO CONTENDING PHILOSOPHIES OF LABOR

I. THE PRINCIPLES OF TRADE UNIONISM AS ADVANCED BY THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

The Federation has not made any strong changes in its organizational structure since it was founded. The basic principle of their unions was and still is "trade unionism". It seems proper at this point that we define the official position of the Federation in this matter. (1)

By trade union we refer to that organization which depends for its structure and membership upon a specific trade. Workers unite as carpenters, machinists, die-cutters, or whatever trade they represent, and form a union of such workers. Trade autonomy is the determining factor.

The extent of this organization depends upon the expansion of the trade in the national economy, and the ability of the organizers to unite the workers. Many of the national trade unions within the American Federation of Labor are represented by members in hundreds of local trade unions affiliated directly with a national trade union organization. This national body is in turn affiliated with the Federation

1 American Federation of Labor, Three mimeograph pages on Trade Unionism (Washington, D. C., 1938).

which represents many other national bodies of trade unions.

This amalgamation makes possible joint action if it seems wise and feasible. Each organization can act separately or in conjunction as the different unions may vote. Thus a different union in a large industrial plant may unite with all the other unions in the plant to strike for their mutual interests. On the otherhand, perhaps only one or two of a dozen different trades within the industry may strike or otherwise bargain for position.

Due to the advance of technological improvements in industrial processes many types of new work have been introduced. It had also eliminated many of the older skilled jobs. The result had been to increase the unskilled percentage of workers and to diminish the skilled. Hence, concessions had to be granted by different trade unions which had voluntarily waived their jurisdictions over certain jobs, so that a union could organize itself more along the line of industrial unionism. (2) Though this sounded reasonable on paper it did not work out so well. There was always the possibility of two or three national or international unions claiming jurisdiction over the same type of work or industry.

Another factor which disturbed trade unionism, was

² J. Raymond Walsh, C. I. O. Industrial Unionism in Action (New York: W. W. Horton and Company, Inc., 1937), pp. 30-34.

the overlapping of types of work. The American Federation of Labor claimed to have found the solution. Several trades often claimed jurisdiction over the men in a new trade. The result was a constant conflict which existed between different organizations. The executive council of the Federation thought such differences were only natural in the evolution of trade unionism, and that time would permit a possible compromise or changes necessary to handle the situation. The Committee for Industrial Organization contended there was no solution in trade unionism; only in industrial organization could the unions expect to help their members.

This shows briefly the present attitude of the Federation's leaders toward trade unionism. It also gives a picture of the merging conflict between two types of unions, trade and industrial.

The term " trade union " designates the type of union in which are organized workers following the same trade or calling. In these unions workers have full opportunity for self expression in dealing directly with questions which affect their immediate character of work in which they are engaged. . . . Machinery exists within the A. F. of L. to federate the ranks of labor for joint activities as far as the members involved may wish to apply such policy. (3)

3 American Federation of Labor, Three mimeographed pages on Trade Unionism (Washington, D. C., 1938).

II. INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

Industrial unionism, contrary to general opinion, was not a recent movement. It has its roots far back in the labor movement. The necessity for industrial organization was realized by labor leaders when mass-production industry was first beginning to assert itself seriously. Directly after the Civil War industry, as a result of the speed-up required by the war, was well on its way to the use of mass-production techniques. Among the first business to so organize was steel. The dire demands of the war gave impetus to the metal manufacturers, especially those who produced steel, the heart of modern production and war. So it was that at the close of the war mass-production was an established fact in American life. Leaders of labor knew that industrial unionism was the only proper method of attack in this area. Even President Green of the American Federation of Labor which was organized years later, which organization and its leader is now fighting industrial unions, was as far back as 1917 to 1918 advocating this same type of unionism. (4)

William Green pointed out the worth of industrial unionism in language every bit as strong as that used by Lewis.

4 American Labor Year Book (Edition for 1917-18; American Federation of Labor; Washington, D. C.) The Case for Industrial Unionism by William Green.

His words are now being quoted freely by the Committee for Industrial Organization, and this must be a tremendous embarrassment to him to be constantly confronted with his statements of the past. The following will give some idea as to Green's former position; and illustrate his vacillation in this long established quarrel between the advocates of industrial unionism and trade unionism:

The organization of men by industry rather than by crafts brings about a more perfect organization, closer cooperation, and tends to develop the highest form of organization. The causes of jurisdictional disputes are considerably decreased and in many industries can be eliminated altogether. (.)

The advantages of such a form of organization is so obvious that one can scarcely conceive of any opposition thereto. A form of organization which protects the interests of the unskilled worker is the form of organization most desirable. Much complaint has been directed against craft organizations because little regard has been given to the problems of the unskilled workers. It is becoming more and more evident that if unskilled workers are forced to work long hours and for low wages, the interests and welfare of the skilled worker are constantly menaced thereby. (.)

Summing up the situation, some of the advantages resulting from an industrial form of organization are the reduction of opportunities or causes for jurisdictional disputes, the concentration of economic strength, the blending into harmonious cooperation of all men employed in industry, and the advancement and protection of the interests of the unskilled laborer in the same proportion as that of the skilled worker. (5)

5 William Green, Industrial Unions Mean Unity (Pamphlet published by the Committee for Industrial Organization, Washington, D.C., 1936.) pp. 9, 10.

Industrial unionism has been a living issue ever since labor first faced the rise of modern industrialism back in 1850-1860, and especially since mass-production methods have become universal as they have today. Steel was always a source of labor's great organization troubles. (6) Until this problem was solved, industrial unionism could hardly expect much advance along other lines. Steel is the heart of modern industrial civilization. Until it was conquered there could be no general victory for labor on the other fronts.

There were a number of different reasons for steel remaining unorganized. For one thing the workers represented many different nationalities. A natural antagonism existed between these groups which made united effort rather difficult to attain. Language was also a barrier which was hard to surmount. Sharply dividing them were religious cleavages also. With such handicaps as this to face it is not to be wondered at that the organizer could not depend upon either morale or cooperation. The employer would wisely stir up animosity by cleverly appealing to racial and religious antagonism. The steel barons never permitted unions to attain a hold. They were also unscrupulous in using as well as misusing the law to support their exploitation. (Nothing was too bad if it accomplished the

6 J. Raymond Walsh, C.I.O. Industrial Unionism in Action (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1937), pp. 48-56

ends desired. Money was king of morals, and what meant a profit was apt to be considered right regardless of the interests of the masses. (7)

The first serious attempt to organize steel took place in 1892 by Amalgamated at Homestead, Pennsylvania. The workers were so seriously smashed at this time that they did not dare to attempt organization again until 1902. Again they were hopelessly defeated by their employers. Steel was a hard industry to open up for the unions.

But steel was not the only industry which felt the impact of labor's efforts to organize along industrial lines. Elsewhere sporadic and enthusiastic groups set themselves up along lines faintly resembling or actually modelled after what we now know as industrial unions. Usually these organizations were weak and incoherent when it came to a struggle with business concerns. As early as 1878 conditions were unbearable, and unrest was growing along with the depression that began at that time. By 1878 conditions seemed hopeless for millions of skilled and especially unskilled laborers. They were at last ready for desperate action. The miners started the most serious trouble by striking in 1874 to 1875. The "Molly Maguires" soon took over the strike, and things from then on began to happen. They unscrupulously exploited the employers and the

7 Mary Heaton Vorce, *Labor's New Millions* (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938), pp. 31-35.

employees alike. (8) In 1876 there were a number of serious riots in the principle cities of the United States. The following year the Baltimore and Ohio and the Pennsylvania Railroads had a strike on their hands. Insurrection broke out in all the main cities these roads served. Pitched battles took place between the mobs and the militia. Both the National Guard and the Militia were defeated in a number of these skirmishes; also many deaths were recorded, and much property damaged before things were again under control. (9)

It was out of this chaotic endeavor of the working millions to become articulate concerning their economic interests that the Knights of Labor (10) were born. This movement gave the worker a class consciousness. It pointed out to him that he had an enemy in the employer who must be met by a united stand. It was the nearest organic movement up to this time which would compare with the present Committee for Industrial Organization. It was not, however, in any sense a thorough-going industrial union. The Knights of Labor were a loose knit group of trade unions, mixed groups of skilled and unskilled workers, and industrial unions. These assemblies were weakly joined to-

8 J. Raymond Walsh, C.I.O. Industrial Unionism in Action (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1937), pp. 20.

9 Mary Heaton Vorce, Labor's New Millions (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938), pp. 126-27

10 J. Raymond Walsh, C.I.O. Industrial Unionism in Action (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1937), pp. 21-23.

gether in a federation. Where trades predominated there trade unions would be strongest, but where industries dominated a section there industrial unionism took on life.

There was never any clear demarkation of membership within the Knights of Labor. They were never certain as to what they actually were. Their membership was a conglomeration of all types of labor groups. Often the Knights would support a third party movement; again they would stress prohibition, co-operatives, or some other rising social movement on the American horizon.

Nevertheless, the Knights of Labor through its locals, and often in opposition to its leaders, led some of the most successful strikes of the century. This antagonism between the ideals of the Knights of Labor and thier leaders made it difficult to keep the organization a solid and invincible unit. It was the lack of this coherence, as much as the failure of the Southwest railway strike and the Haymarket bombing, which led to its final collapse.

Springing from the shattered Knights of Labor came the American Federation of Labor. Under the leadership of Samuel Gompers the printers, the iron and steel workers, along with the cigar workers organized the Federation. A further statement of the beginning of this institution is to be found elsewhere in this thesis. With the inauguration of the Federation, industrial unionism gave way to the craft union movement.

As for industrial unionism, it was for the time a dead factor in the life of labor only to be later revived in a few of the basic industries. Glass, automobiles, clothing, and textiles had some sporadic success in industrial organization. For the moment it is necessary to leave the Knights of Labor and their early experiments in industrial unionism, and take up other endeavors along this line.

The American Federation of Labor was never seriously interested in industrial unionism. It represented the aristocracy of labor. Its strength rested in the skilled trades. Its aims were limited, consequently, it was exclusive. It was natural, therefore, that somewhere along the line a leader should arise who would come to the aid of the workers not fortunate enough to find support or unity within the Federation.

This was Daniel De Leon. (11) He made the first serious attempt to organize an industrial union. Whereas the Knights of Labor had done so, not as a policy, but as an accident due to expediency or other forces of circumstance, De Leon deliberately set about organizing workers industrially. This organization was known as the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance. (12) It failed because it did not first dissolve the craft unions which already stood in the way, and which sabotaged the

11 Ibid., p. 24.

12 Ibid., p. 24.

movement. Later the Western Federation of Miners broke away from the American Federation of Labor, and set up an independent body consisting of skilled and unskilled workers alike. They had tried to work with the Federation, but when they sought help during a strike crisis in 1904 the Federation proved helpless in giving them support. (13)

The result was that the Mine Owner's Association was quick to crush out the unions with every weapon at their disposal; vigilantes, the courts, and the press assisted them. The Federation stood by and watched the collapse. They could do nothing because of jurisdictional difficulties involving crafts. Soon the workers in desperation sent delegates to a meeting in Chicago which represented the fragments still holding together in spite of the Mine Owner's Association. The delegates organized the Industrial Workers of the World. This took place in 1905. Thus the "One Big Union" slogan was born in industrial strife. It was never a strongly united movement, and in 1907 the Western Federation of Miners withdrew along with the brewery workers. The latter group re-entered the American Federation of Labor. Thus the "Wobblies" consisted mostly of lumberjacks, dock workers, and hoboes; merely casual laborers.

There is no need in this thesis to consider in detail the work of the Industrial Workers of the World; suffice it to say that they conducted over 150 strikes during their history.

13 Ibid., p. 25.

It was always a weakly organized movement, gaining its strength solely from the militancy and enthusiasm of its leaders and the radical units represented in its ranks. The criminal syndicalism laws passed in the country during the World War put an end to its activities. Its leaders were jailed, and its outstanding personality, Bill Haywood, was given a twenty year sentence. The Communist movement today is the nearest spirit akin to the International Workers of the World. It differs in many respects but represents a similar militancy of spirit.

All this time, and right up to the present, the amalgamating of craft unions into one large union, was gaining support within the ranks of the American Federation of Labor. Gompers fought this movement in the birth and early years of the Federation. But still the idea persisted in the minds of many unionists; especially was this spirit strong among the miners. In fact, the United Mine Workers of America was itself an industrial union. After Gompers' death this insurgency grew more rapidly. Even as early as 1915 only twenty-eight of the 103 National Unions were entirely craft organizations. (14) The miners and others were thoroughly industrialized.

It is interesting to note that even William Green was a staunch supporter of the industrial ideal. Was he not a member of the United Mine Workers of America? This fact stands in con-

¹⁴ J. Raymond Walsh, C.I.O. Industrial Unionism in Action (New York: Norton and Company, Inc., 1937), p. 26.

trast to his present opposition to Lewis' attempt to organize the workers into industrial unions. Speaking of this type of setup Green wrote:

In the development of industry and organization the tendency is toward concentration and perfection. This applies to the organization of labor as well as to the organization of industry and capital. Hence the reason why organized labor is gradually passing from craft organization to the more effective industrial forms of organization. It may be well nigh impossible to eliminate the craft form of organization in certain lines of industry. However, it is quite possible to establish industrial forms of organization in the railroad industry, the printing industry, and in other industries where groups of organizations are formed into councils and federated bodies. (15)

In 1933 a new factor entered the picture. The National Labor Relations Act was passed by the Government. This law theoretically gave labor the right to organize and bargain collectively, and protected its rights thereof. (16) Under the impetus of this protection the American Federation of Labor jumped in membership to more than three and a half million. The greatest increases took place among those which were geared industrially. The United Mine Workers, and other organizations of a similar structure increased 132 per cent. Craft unions, on the other hand, only advanced thirteen per cent. (It) can readily be seen that modern labor was favorable

15 William Green, The Case for Industrial Unionism (Pamphlet: Industrial Unions Mean Unity.) Committee for Industrial Organization, Washington, D.C., 1938

16 J. Raymond Walsh, C.I.O. Industrial Unionism in Action (New York: Norton and Company, Inc., 1937), p. 26

to industrial unionism. (17)

It was in 1935 that this movement was beginning to reach a point of completion in the already industrialized fields. They were now ready for action in other areas not yet reached. The Committee for Industrial Organization was especially active. This organization within its own jurisdiction, had already reached its peak of efficiency. Steel and automobile industries were waiting for organization. So it was that the Committee for Industrial Organization stepped out into new territory. Many of the activities in the organized industries started to unionize as a result of local leadership itself, and were only later brought into the larger movement of industrial unionism. There was a tremendous revolution going on within the whole labor setup. It was the beginning of a great victory in steel and in many of the other basic industries of American Life. It was also the beginning of the end of craft domination in the labor movement. At any rate, a startling phenomenon had occurred which was to sweep another three million men into labor's ranks, and this was to happen along industrial lines. Unheard of before! Yes. But it was happening.

17 Ibid., pp. 29-30.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTENDING LABOR MOVEMENTS

I. THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

In the year 1881 representative labor leaders from all over the United States met in Terre Haute, Indiana, to consider ways and means of consolidating labor power and forces in the country. Their interests were entirely concerned with trade unionism. Industrial unions were considered at that time by the labor movement to be either unnecessary or impractical.

Beside the interest expressed in a federation of union strength, matters of labor policy were discussed. The general emphasis was upon the need of shorter work days, a union organization which was mon-racial, non-sectarian, and a membership which would include any and all classes of workmen.

This conference gave impetus to another which followed shortly afterward. This second one was held in Pittsburg, November fifteenth, 1881. This was the birthday of the American Federation of Labor. At that meeting there were 107 delegates from National and International Unions, Central Labor Bodies from many cities, and other union organizations. They represented a total membership of approximately 262,000. (1)

It was out of this small beginning that the greater body has grown which is being considered in this thesis. The American Federation of Labor's present organizational setup gives us a background for the present labor picture. It is presented forthwith.

The American Federation of Labor is not a great union as one generally thinks of one. It is rather a federation of many organizations under one head. In 1937 there were 745 City Federations or Central Labor Bodies. These were further consolidated into forty-nine different state organizations. Beyond that, and included in the Federation, are 1,305 local unions, 103 National and International Unions, and four departments. Each of these organizations has its own autonomy, and is democratically represented in each of the higher brackets or directly in the Federation itself. (2)

The American Federation of Labor itself has no power except it receives it from its member-unions or affiliated bodies. Wage rates, and other internal affairs of the union, are the direct affair of the union concerned and not of the Federation itself. The whole arrangement is a voluntary one depending upon education and common interests to hold it together.

2 William Green, A Great American Institution
(A. F. of L. Publication, Washington, D. C. 1937) pp. 2-3.

The Federation, because of its united voice, articulated the workers' needs in Congress. It fought for national and state laws which would help labor, and supported other measures which by direction or indirection might be helpful to the working people of America.

It emphasized the trade union as the local unit of labor organization, and stressed the importance of forming unions on this basis. However, the inroads of modern mass production led to many compromises resulting in some industrial unions being accepted into membership. In textiles and in mining there were industrial unions within the framework of the Federation. Later this resulted in a split in the labor movement led by the industrial unions and opposed by the trade unions.

The Federation through its international unions, had membership in Canada, the United States, Porto Rico, Alaska, and Hawaii.

International and national unions can contain within their memberships various trades or only one trade. Such an organization may cover an entire industry, such as mining, which would include a multitude of independent trade unions. Again, it may include trade unions representing several kinds of work which have some common basis or trade such as in the wood working industry. Here there are unions of carpenters, wood carvers, pattern makers, and furniture builders. Because

of the modern industrial setup, national and international unions are broadening their activities to include more trades within their ranks.

In some major industries several international or national organizations may be set up. This occurred in the building, the railroad, and the metal trades. Each of these groups organized itself into departments of the American Federation of Labor. The metal and construction trades further divided their departments into local units comprising city organizations. The railroads were federated along lines paralleling the railway system itself. So it was that the various bodies of the Federation united within the larger units, and yet were organized so as to be able to meet local, state and national needs of their various memberships.

To get a direct picture of this one would say that all authority rests theoretically with the local unions, the national, or the international union. There was no authority to strike or bargain collectively vested in the city, state or national organizations within the Federation. The first mentioned grouping was for bargaining purposes with the employer. The last mentioned grouping was for bargaining in the political area. Each played a part in winning better conditions for the worker; one by raising pay the other by legislation.

The executive body of the American Federation of Labor

consists of a president, a secretary-treasurer, and fifteen vice presidents. This body is known as the executive council. It is responsible for calling the conventions which are made up of representatives of the affiliated bodies of the Federation. These delegates are proportioned according to the dues-paying membership of the affiliated bodies. Between conventions all important matters of the Federation are handled by the Executive Council which meets four times a year. The convention, however, is the supreme law making body of the organization.

The president and the secretary-treasurer are full time representatives, and administer the business of the Federation from their headquarters in Washington, District of Columbia.

The financial support of the American Federation of Labor comes from a per capita tax paid by all national and international unions of one cent per member per month. Unions which are directly affiliated pay thirty-five cents per member. All central labor organizations and state federations pay annual dues of ten dollars a year.

This intricate machine is efficient from the standpoint of the organization itself, if not from the viewpoint of modern labor practice or value. It has been many years in the building. It represents the compromises, the struggles, and the social integration of American labor forces during the past fifty

years. Only now has there been any serious threat to disrupt this movement. It started within the ranks of the Federation only to split off and grow outside. This newer organization is known as the Committee for Industrial Organization. It has an interesting contribution to make to labor organizational activity which it is well to observe.

II. THE COMMITTEE FOR INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

The American Federation of Labor held its 1935 annual convention in Atlantic City. This October was the dawn of a new day in the annals of American labor history. The great problem before the convention was that of industrial unionism versus trade unionism. It was the contention of many, contrary to others in the labor movement, that there were millions of workers in the mass-production industries who should be organized along industrial lines. The Federation was in no position to speak for American labor in these fields. Further, this labor movement represented the skilled workers only, and neglected almost entirely the unskilled. Only such groups as the United Mine Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the International Ladies Garment Workers were organizing the industrial masses in any real sense.

In 1935 the government had put into effect the National Industrial Recovery Act and other New Deal legislation which made labor organizing opportune and much more effective than

it had been under all other administrations. Labor immediately sent organizers into the field, and soon had a half million coal workers in an industrial union. Everywhere organization grew up out of their initiative, but since they represented mass-production and unskilled labor they knocked at the Federation's door in vain. It had no framework into which such a type of organization would fit. True they had Federal Unions which permitted a factory to have a union, but it did not permit whole industries to come in as one unit of labor. (3) It was geared rather for a trade union system, and was unprepared, or unwilling as the opposition claimed, to accept them.

It was this failure to organize these workers during the two previous years which led to the Federation's trouble at the 1935 convention. The opposition to the Federation's policy was led by John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers of America. He and many others had for years favored this type of unionism among the mass-production industries, but now the breach was critical. They claimed it would be impossible to wait for the trade unionist leaders to come to their way of thinking. Something had to be done now. It was a result of this rising feeling of a need for a concerted drive on the unorganized industries which led eight of the oppositional leaders to meet in Washington, D. C., following the 1935 American Federation of

3 Committee for Industrial Organization, The C.I.O.
(Washington, D.C., 1937), Pamphlet, Publication No. 12. p. 9.

Labor Convention. John L. Lewis was appointed chairman of the newly organized committee. The other members were: Charles B. Howard of the International Typographical Union, David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers, Thomas H. Brown of the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Thomas F. MacMahon of the United Textile Workers, Harvey C. Fremming of the Oil Workers, and Max Zaritsky of the Cap and Millinery Workers.

The other officers of the Committee for Industrial Organization were John Brophy, director, and Charles P. Howard, secretary. They opened an office in the Rust Building in Washington, and so initiated a new movement in the labor world. Out of this small beginning there originated one of the most powerful labor movements in American history; one which led to a split in the labor's masses.

The Committee's intention was to offer more effective encouragement and assistance to the workers in mass-productive and in unorganized industries. It was not their original purpose to split from the Federation of Labor.

The Committee set out in all sincerity to put this program into effect. It was not a dual union movement. On the contrary, it sought to prevent dual unionism, and to find ways and means whereby the unorganized might be brought into the A. F. of L. (4)

4 Ibid., p. 11.

Up until this time the Committee for Industrial Organization was still affiliated through its constituent membership with the Federation. But since this time the Federation has expelled from its membership most of the organizations which were connected with the Committee. (5) Consequently, the latter organization set up its own convention, and became a separate entity. Briefly, the following paragraphs will demonstrate the progress of this new institution.

The latest figures show that there are now approximately nine hundred local unions in the Committee for Industrial Organization. Over six hundred of these are local industrial unions with a membership of over 225,000 members. Another 150 of these are now transferred to National Unions. (6)

The original committee consisted of eight presidents of international unions. Now there are thirty-two national and international unions represented. And throughout the country there are forty-eight regional and sub-regional offices. Further facilitating the activities of the Committee for Industrial Organization, councils have been set up in cities, also in states. This latter move proved necessary because

5 Committee for Industrial Organization, The Program of the C.I.O. (Washington, D. C., 1937), Pamphlet, Publication No. 18. p. 8.

6 Ibid., p. 7.

the American Federation of Labor was driving out the Committee for Industrial Organization's affiliates from their Central Labor Bodies, and these organizations were without any constructive local leadership or unity except within the union itself. They needed city and state connections.

The rapid alienation of the Committee by the mother organization led to the calling of the 1937 National Conference in Atlantic City during October. It was here decided to definitely authorize a convention, and on October fifteenth, the Conference unanimously adopted the resolution authorizing the calling of a national gathering of the Committee for Industrial Organization unions.

Whereas, this Conference of representatives of the national and international unions affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organization has recorded remarkable achievements in the organization of millions of heretofore unorganized workers;

Whereas, the organization of approximately 4,000,000 workers in 32 national and international unions and 600 Local Industrial Unions establishes the necessity for the creation of machinery to consolidate the existing situation and to afford opportunities for continued organizational activities.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the executive officers of the Committee for Industrial Organization are hereby authorized to issue a call, at such time as they deem it advisable and expedient, to all the national and international unions, Local Industrial Unions, and city and state Industrial Union Councils affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organization to attend a national convention. (7)

This conference which was called by the Committee for Industrial Organization to consider problems relating to their work, and which was organized to promote industrial unionism and to organize a convention as above mentioned, consisted of two hundred delegates. These included the executive officers of the thirty-two national and international unions together with more than six hundred local unions and city and state Industrial Union Councils. Roughly, these leaders represented a membership of nearly four million. (8)

This is a picture of the rapid rise of the Committee for Industrial Organization on the labor horizon. Later it will be necessary to deal with the principles which express this conflict. We have dealt with a description of the organization as it now stands. It is young, and many changes are taking place, but slowly it is shaping into a permanent body of American labor which both the Government and the American Federation of Labor will have to deal with.

8 Ibid., p. 35.

CHAPTER V

THE INTRA-LABOR CONFLICT AND RECENT ATTEMPTS AT UNITY

I. THE 1937 LABOR CONVENTIONS

The Committee for Industrial Organization was formed to promote, according to its leaders, labor unity. Its primary purpose was to reach the millions of unorganized workers in American industry, and add them to the ranks of the American Federation of Labor.

These workers were to be found mostly in the mass-production industries, and the Committee felt that industrial unionism was the proper method of handling the situation.

Contrariwise, the Federation contended that most of these men could be reached through organizations already affiliated with the parent organization. Many of the men could be enlisted in craft unions.

The Committee considered itself as a uniting force; but the Federation looked upon it as a dividing committee.

There was much friction between leaders of the two ideologies of labor until finally the tension became unbearable. The struggle centered about two figures, President Green of the American Federation of Labor and John L. Lewis who was the powerful leader of the United Mine Workers of America. The latter individual supported industrial unionism.

The final result was the expulsion of the Committee for Industrial Organization. (1)

As both factions blamed each other for the split in the labor movement, so both continued to hold the other responsible for the failure to unite again. The Committee tried to re-assert its power within the Federation by calling the expulsion illegal, but opposing leaders prevailed, and the Committee for Industrial Organization was expelled, and with it went some three to four million members. Some of these men were of long standing in the mother organization, while others were recent additions to union ranks as a result of the drive by the Committee for Industrial Organization. This was especially true of the mass-production industries.

The two great labor bodies were holding simultaneous national conventions in October, 1937. The Federation was meeting in Denver, Colorado, and the Committee for Industrial Organization at Atlantic City, New Jersey.

It was the contention of the latter organization that they started the peace negotiations which later failed. On October twelfth, 1937, by vote of their convention, a telegram was sent to the Federation's Convention meeting in Denver, asking them to organize a committee to meet with a similar

1 Committee for Industrial Organization, The C.I.O. (Washington, D. C., 1937) Pamphlet, Publication No. 12. pp. 15-16.

committee from the Committee for Industrial Organization, and to talk over the possibilities of uniting their efforts and settling their differences. (2)

This lengthy telegram contained a strong statement of policy, and emphasised the progress made by the Committee. The tone of it was somewhat braggadocio. It concluded with this one paragraph which is printed here because it deals with the primary purpose of the telegram. The other material was incidental, so it is omitted:

The C.I.O. further proposes that this conference should be attended by a committee of one hundred from the A. F. of L. and a committee of a similar number from the C.I.O. representing the respective national and international unions affiliated with such organizations. This conference would then consider the methods and means whereby a unified labor movement can be brought about in America. (3)

The telegram was signed by Harvey Fremming, secretary pro tem for the Committee for Industrial Organization.

Before the telegram was sent it was thoroughly discussed on the floor of the Convention. It received strong support from all the leaders, and was finally voted upon by the rank and file of delegates and forwarded to the Federation of Labor's Convention at Denver.

The Federation, through its secretary, Frank Morrison,

2 Mary Heaton Vorce, Labor's New Millions (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938), p. 273

3 The Committee for Industrial Organization, The Program of the C.I.O. (Washington, D. C., 1937), Pamphlet, Publication No. 18. p. 18.

wired Atlantic City the position of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor in reference to the aforementioned telegram. It was the feeling of this group that the committee suggested was too large, and was so desired simply to further confuse the issue by enhancing the possibility of conflict as large groups are apt to do. Nevertheless, the Federation was interested in "peaceful negotiations." It would be glad to meet with a smaller committee. (4)

The Committee for Industrial Organization contended in answer to these objections that it had always been customary to meet in large committees as Mr. Green knew when the United Mine Workers met in conference with the employers. Later the committee could be reduced. It was only because a large committee seemed more in harmony with democratic principles that it was suggested. But the Committee would not hold up negotiations, and would be glad to appoint a committee of ten to meet with a similar group from the Federation in Washington, D. C., on October twenty-fifth, 1937.

This proposition proved agreeable; the opposing committees were formed. The membership of the two committees were as follows:

For the Committee for Industrial Organization; Phillip

4 Ibid., pp. 30-31.

Murray, Sidney Hillman, David Dubinsky, Harvey Fremming, James B. Carey, Sherman Dalrymple, Homer Martin, Michael Quill, Joseph Curran, and Abram Flaxer. Sidney Hillman was unavoidably absent, and his place was filled by Charles P. Howard, Secretary for the Committee for Industrial Organization and President of the International Typographical Union. Matthew Woll, George Harrison, and George Bugnaizet composed the committee for the American Federation of Labor. This committee the Federation would not enlarge.

II. THE NEGOTIATIONS AT WASHINGTON

The Committee for Industrial Organization's Position:

The two committees met in Washington as proposed, and carried on negotiations for two months. They adjourned without successfully effecting the merger. Both organizations held the other responsible for this failure. Both were unyielding on the basic principles which separated them. The following summary of this struggle will throw light upon their fundamental differences without in any way advocating one side or the other.

The Committee for Industrial Organization's position will be considered first. This Committee opened the conference with three basic proposals which might be summarized as follows:

1. Mass-production industries shall be organized along

industrial lines. Such corporations as General Motors, United States Steel, Chrysler, and Ford are representative institutions.

2. The American Federation of Labor will have a department known as the Committee for Industrial Organization.

3. All unions now affiliated with this Committee shall be given complete autonomy and be directed by its own officers. It shall have sole jurisdictional rights in organizing workers in those industries considered in point 1., and also in matters effecting the affiliated organizations.

4. A convention shall be arranged at a time and place agreed upon by the Federation and the Committee. It will be the purpose of the organization to vote upon the foregoing agreement, and to further work out the means of regulation necessary to carrying out this agreement. (5)

The Federation countered with proposals which are mentioned later in this chapter. The heart of the counter proposal was the eventual dissolution of the Committee for Industrial Organization; the American Federation of Labor was to become the sole authority in matters of jurisdiction. (6)

The chairman, answering for the Committee, pointed out

5 Ibid., p. 33.

6 Mary Heaton Vorce, *Labor's New Millions* (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938), p. 274

that such a proposal was a betrayal of their membership, and would be unacceptable. He also pointed out that it was a surrender of principle. After much dickering the meetings were terminated on December twenty-first, 1937.

The viewpoint of the Committee was that the oppositional committee would not listen to the voice of the industrial worker in his demand for industrial unionism. It was in their minds a fight of the industrial principle of unionism against the old and reactionary craft union idea.

Each party immediately upon the breakdown of negotiations released for its membership and the press the reasons for the failure. Phillip Murray of the Committee for Industrial Organization gave the following explanation to the press:

The Committee for Industrial Organization, he insisted, initiated the conference which had been going on since October twenty-fifth. It had offered four million organized workers to the American Federation of Labor, but they refused to accept them because of the desire of the Committee to have the four following conditions met:

1. The Federation must accept thirty-three national and international unions of the Committee.
2. "That charters be issued by the A.F. of L. to each of these unions."
3. Industrial union charters shall be issued to those unions considered acceptable to industrial organization, as

agreed upon by the Committee for Industrial Organization.

4. That following the acceptance of the Committee's membership, there will be a joint committee appointed by the conflicting unions to aid in coming to an acceptable agreement.

(7)

Phillip Murray continues to point out that the refusal to accept the Committee meant the continuation of the intra-labor strife. In specific support of this contention he refers to the struggle between the International Woodworkers Union of the Committee for Industrial Organization and the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. Again, a similar condition existed between the United Radio, Electrical and Machine Workers of the Committee and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers of the Federation. The viewpoint of the Federation was that these unions must first settle their differences before the Committee for Industrial Organization could be accepted.

The Committee claimed that there was no jurisdictional power in the Federation to terminate this conflict in conjunction with the Committee for Industrial Organization. The onus of this split rests, therefore, on the leadership of the American Federation of Labor and not on the Committee for Industrial Organization. (8)

7 Committee for Industrial Organization, The Program of the C.I.O. (Washington, D.C., 1937), Pamphlet. p. 35.

8 Ibid., p. 35.

The conclusion reached was that the Committee would have to continue to organize industrial unions, and have its own organizational setup. This would necessitate having its own national conventions as provided for at the Atlantic City meeting. The blame, however, for the lack of unity, and for the failure to consolidate labor's ranks in these recent discussions, rests squarely upon the shoulders of the leaders of the Federation. This was the conclusion of the Committee's leaders.

The Position of the American Federation of Labor: On December twenty-nine, 1937, President Green of the Federation sent to all the National and International Unions, State Federations of Labor, City Central Bodies, and directly affiliated unions the report of the special committee of the American Federation of Labor which met with the Committee representing the Committee for Industrial Organization.

The report was included in the letter which contained further remarks on the failure to settle differences, and explained the official position of the Federation in these negotiations. The contents of this report, and the contents of that letter are herewith presented.

The committee was authorized by the executive council and the convention of the Federation to try to bring about a uniting of the forces of American labor on a "sound and solid basis". In this, President Green asserts, the committee

did all in its power to do, and therefore puts the responsibility for failure in the negotiations squarely before the Committee for Industrial Organization. He points to the Committee's report as evidence of this effort and the reason for the failure.

The Committee pointed out that the meeting was a failure, and that the discussions and meetings were abruptly terminated by the Committee. This was due to the Federation refusing to surrender its authority to the dictator, John L. Lewis, chairman of the Committee.

The Committee for Industrial Organization demanded that the American Federation of Labor re-establish all former organizations of that body which had been dismissed, and give them full standing again. Furthermore, it asked that all new organizations chartered independently by the Committee for Industrial Organization be admitted into membership in the American Federation of Labor.

This was considered by the American Federation of Labor committee as being tantamount to having dual unionism within their ranks. Thus the present situation or conflict would have been intensified. Not only would this be disastrous to labor, causing much tension, but it would be impossible for employers of labor. They would find themselves facing two unions; both representing the same interests and both within the American Federation of Labor. Such a relationship would be intolerable

to all concerned, labor, employer, and the public.

In contrast to this the committee offered the Committee for Industrial Organization the following terms:

..... The admittance of all former affiliated unions to the A. F. of L. immediately upon the working out of a plan and the peculiar problems affecting all other organizations since chartered by the C. I. O., with the understanding that said organizations would be reestablished in their former status as though no breach had occurred, and with no questions raised regarding the respective jurisdictions. (9)

Conferences were suggested as a means of settling jurisdictional conflicts on the field. The problem was not so much the matter of industrial unions versus craft unions as it was the problem of eliminating dual organizations. By having conferences between the dual unions they could work out a means of promoting unity, and thus bring about harmony in the labor world.

This plan was at first, according to the committee, thought so acceptable by the Committee for Industrial Union that at a joint meeting of the committees it was unanimously agreed upon as the way out of the dilemma. But the whole thing was later repudiated because John L. Lewis vetoed it. (10)

9 William Green, A Letter addressed to National and International Unions, State Federations of Labor, City Central Bodies and Directly Affiliated Unions. (Washington, D.C., December twenty-ninth, 1937.

10 News item in the New York Times, Wednesday, January twelfth, 1938.

It was, as a result of this last occurrence, that the committee felt justified in condemning Lewis as the one who broke up the movement for unity, and made further work impossible. Green's letter which we have already quoted, emphasized this side of the issue likewise. He held his former colleague entirely responsible for the failure of negotiations. Consequently, he appealed to the organizations of the American Federation of Labor to reassert their allegiance to the Federation, and to aid in a militant fight against the Committee for Industrial Organization. He stressed the importance of the Federation as representing the workers, and refused to compromise his principles and so offend the loyal members of his organization. Clinching this, he referred to the Federation's long labor history. Furthermore, he pointed out the fact that the Committee was a dual movement formed by men who were at one time affiliated with the Federation. This took place in spite of the fact that the Federation was a democratic institution which made it possible for the members to express their grievances within their own organization. The Committee, he went on, was an autocratic organization dominated by John L. Lewis.

The spirit of the letter was somewhat personal, but much of the contents seemed reasonable and convincing. This was especially true of the report of the committee representing the American Federation of Labor. But before any conclusion should be drawn it would be well to compare Green's statements with

those of Phillip Murray in the preceding section of this chapter.

The viewpoint of the Committee was that the Federation was unwilling to carry on negotiations unless it was done so on their terms. The other party claimed the same. The following official statement of the American Federation of Labor demonstrates their present stand in this matter:

During all the period which has intervened since the Committee for Industrial Organization was formed the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor has discreetly and patiently pleaded for a conference for the purpose of healing the breach, uniting labor's forces and settling the differences.

A standing committee of three distinguished representatives of labor has been ready and willing to meet a like committee from the Committee for Industrial Organization. Our requests for such a meeting have been rejected and our invitation to meet and confer has been scornfully spurned. We have sought to compose the differences and to establish labor with a united basis but all our efforts in that direction have been of no avail. (11)

11 William Green, Green Assails C.I.O., Sit-Down Strikes and Third Party Movements (Washington, D. C., American Federation of Labor Pamphlet, 1937). It is an address delivered by Green at Dallas, Texas, September sixth, 1937. p. 10.

CHAPTER VI

LABOR'S NEW LEGAL STATUS IN THE GOVERNMENT

Both the Committee for Industrial Organization and the American Federation of Labor are jointly agreed upon the value of the National Labor Relations Act which was passed into law on its approval, July 5, 1935. It stimulated the activities of the Committee for Industrial Organization and the American Federation of Labor, and made possible further inroads into the unorganized fields of American labor. In fact, John L. Lewis and his followers claim, that because of William Green's failure to use the advantages of this law along with other New Deal legislation, they were forced to start their independent activities.

Although it is not necessary to include the whole law as enacted by the United States Government in reference to labor's new rights, it does, however, seem imperative that certain sections be quoted completely. These are as follows:

Section 7. Rights of Employees. Employees shall have the right of self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in concerted activities, for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.

Section 8. (Unfair Labor Practices of Employers). It shall be an unfair labor practice for an employer--

(1) To interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of the rights^{VI} guaranteed in Section 7.

(2) To dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of any labor organization or contribute financial or other support to it: Provided, That subject to rules and regulations made and published by the Board pursuant to Section 6 (a), an employer shall not be prohibited from permitting employees to confere with him during working hours without loss of time or pay.

(3) By discrimination in regard to hire or tenure of employment or any term or condition of employment to encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization: Provided, That nothing in this act, or in the National Industrial Recovery Act (U.S.C., Supp. VII, title 15, secs. 701-712), as amended from time to time, or in any code or agreement approved or prescribed thereunder, or in any other statute of the United States, shall preclude an employer from making an agreement with a labor organization (not established, maintained, or assisted by any action defined in this Act as an unfair labor practice) to require as a condition of employment membership therein, if such labor organization is the representative of the employees as provided in Section 9 (a), in the appropriate collective bargaining unit covered by such agreement when made.

(4) To discharge or otherwise discriminate against an employee because he has filed charges or given testimony under this Act.

(5) To refuse to bargain collectively with the representatives of his employees, subject to the provisions of Section 9 (a). (1)

On April 12, 1937, The United States Supreme Court sustained the law, making the above quoted privileges the legal right of every employee in the country, and thus gave to labor a new legal status. The national court and legislature assured

1 National Labor Relations Act (Wagner-Connery Act) Act of July, 1935 (S. 1958) Public No. 198, 74th Congress (49 Stat. 449; U.S. Code, Supp. II, Title 29, Sections 156-166.

American labor the necessary security needed in establishing unions wherever and whenever it pleased. There needed to be no fear or caution because of reprisals. Labor had received its Magna Charta.

The National Labor Relations Act insured the worker in his right to organize and to bargain collectively. He freely could choose his own leaders and union, and, if a company union attempted to represent him, he could, along with other members, ask for a secret ballot under the direction of the National Labor Relations Board.

Appeals could also be made to this board whenever one was dismissed for union activities or membership. The law also made it illegal to discriminate in any way against union workmen. A company could not make non-union or company union membership a prerequisite to employment. Any violation of these rules could be forwarded to the regional Board office for a hearing. This Board would then pass upon the justice of the complaint and issue its ruling. An employee was thus protected from undue coercion on the part of his employer.

The Circuit Court of Appeals, as in the case of other federal laws, is empowered to try and impose fines or imprisonments for a violation of the National Labor Relations Act.

The passing of this Act was the beginning of a revived labor movement in the United States. Everywhere labor took courage, and made preparation to reach the unorganized. The

American Federation of Labor was stimulated into new action.(1)
 But the spectacular gains were made in the mass-production industries under the leadership of John L. Lewis and the Committee for Industrial Organization. (2)

The tremendous scope covered by the National Labor Relations Board (this board supervises the National Labor Relations Act) can best be understood in the light of the reports coming from the Conciliation Service of the Act. The following statistics have graphically pictured what this new law has meant to labor, and the huge amount of work involved in handling labor disputes, especially strikes:

	6 months July-Dec. 1937	3 months Jan.-March 1938
Strikes	855 (434,557)	129 (146,962)
Threatened Strikes	226 (131,953)	79 (41,923)
Controversies	270 (65,722)	103 (64,567)
Lockouts	52 (16,029)	13 (8,488)
Total	1,403 (648,261)	234 (261,940)
Arbitration	37 (31,000)	31 (2,572). (3)

1 Mary Heaton Vorce, Labor's New Millions (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938), pp. 238-46

2 Ibid., p. 26-27

3 Labor Relations Reporter, Vol. 2, No. 14 (Washington: June 6, 1938)

This law has been of real significance to the worker as thousands of men can testify. They have had their jobs restored as well as back pay given them when they have been dismissed because of union activities.

Anton Kurch, a member of Lodge 1528 of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee was paid \$1,936,35 in back pay because The Falk Corporation had fired him for union activities. His case was appealed to the National Labor Relations Board and an adjustment was secured. (4)

4 News Item in the CIO News, National Edition, March 26, 1938. pp. 2.

CHAPTER VII

LABOR AND THE CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL SITUATION

There are two divergent ideas about the use of politics in the labor movement. The one viewpoint is held by the officials of the American Federation of Labor, and the other is sponsored by the insurgents, the officers of the Committee for Industrial Organization. The first is a non-political, non-partisan attitude. The other group stresses a position which varies from direct partisanship in the present party setup to the formation of a labor party.

The Federation has long supported the idea that only friends should be helped into political office, while enemies should be fought regardless of party. Direct intervention in politics, however, has never been accepted as within the jurisdiction of the unions. Thus one could find in the American Federation of Labor, as one would find in a social lodge, men who backed politicians of the several persuasions represented on the national or state tickets.

This never worked out successfully for labor. Their friends were continually betraying them, or they were thrown into a hopeless situation where it was impossible for them to avoid labor's demands being flouted.

Green, like his predecessor Gompers, continued to support the theory of non-political activity within the frame-

work of the Federation.

The Committee for Industrial Organization, however, was from the beginning interested in the political arena. It was specific in naming those whom they supported, and contributed to the candidates with funds from their own "war chests". They felt this was much more effective than mere lobbying which had been the tactics of the American Federation of Labor. If one is to judge by results the Committee for Industrial Organization certainly has the evidence to support its contention. For the first time in labor's history there have been effective inroads made into the legislative and legal divisions of government. Legislation such as the National Labor Relations Act shows the fruitage of direct intervention by labor in politics. The further support of the Supreme Court of Section 7 (a) of this act is a further example of the legal import of labor's political fight. (1)

The political picture will demonstrate how industrial unions have come to grip^s with the political situation. Labor's Non-Partisan League was the first powerful effort on Labor's part to directly strengthen their position in government. (2)

1 National Labor Relations Act (Wagner-Connelly Act) Act of July, 1935 (S. 1958) Public No. 198, 74th Congress (49 Stat. 449; U.S. Code, Supp.II, Title 29, Sections 156-166.

2. J. Raymond Walsh, C.I.O. Industrial Unionism in Action (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1937), pp. 261 to 263.

It was formed in the summer of 1936 under the leadership of John L. Lewis, Sidney Hillman, and George L. Berry. All three of these men were leaders in the growing Committee for Industrial Organization. John L. Lewis was elected chairman of the board of the League, while Berry was made president.

The avowed purpose of this organization was to elect Roosevelt to another term. To make this assistance even more constructive, the Committee gave the Democratic campaign fund half a million dollars. This was support with a vengeance.

Such tremendous power as represented in this contribution to a political party led to a cry of a third party, and that Lewis had presidential ambitions. Whether or not this could be or is true remains to be seen. As for the third party, this has not emerged as a threat.

Not only did the Non-Partisan League express the growing interest of labor in politics, but others arose to express labor's interests in government leadership. The American Labor Party united the union men of New York State, and were strong supporters of Roosevelt for president and LaGuardia for mayor of New York City. (3) The West Coast was also represented by a similar movement. Here the Washington Commonwealth Federation brought together all those who favored the New Deal program,

3 Ibid., pp. 255-56

and swung huge blocks of labor's votes to Roosevelt and his followers. (4)

But the Non-Partisan League was undoubtedly the most influential and powerful. It represented labor's direct attempt to elect men to office regardless of party. If the Democratic Party offered the best man then he received its support. Had the Republicans put forward a man who had been considered by them of better calibre then it would have supported him. Whenever it seemed necessary the League was ready to establish a third party to meet its requirements. It had no party axe to grind, but it had a political mind to express. Labor was developing a political philosophy. The American Federation of Labor had been reluctant to express itself about a party, only about a man; the Committee for Industrial Organization which was responsible for the Non-Partisan League and the American Labor Party was not so timid. The Committee stipulated whom it wanted, and what party supported its aims. In the past it has thrown its forces toward the Democratic Party.

The political objectives of labor are pretty well marked by the position of these organizations above mentioned. They have emphasized the civil liberties of the people and their Bill of Rights. They have insisted that the government give them the

4 Ibid., pp. 260-65.

right to organize, to bargain collectively, and if necessary to strike. This must be supported by law.

Labor has also, through these organizations as well as directly, supported old age pensions and insurance against sickness and accident. Their emphasis has been on the wage and hour regulations. By way of helping the unemployed they have been strong advocates of unemployment compensation and adequate relief. The Democratic Party's housing program and the conservation of natural resources have also received their urgent support.

In several areas they have gone further and have aided those political leaders who favored public ownership of utilities as in Detroit. (5)

It is interesting to note that the Non-Partisan League, which was so strongly and ably backed by the Committee for Industrial Organization, has received such support from the rank and file of the American Federation of Labor. In practically every state the two opposing forces have consolidated their man power for the Administration. Even on the West Coast, with Dave Beck the powerful leader of the Federation, the two bodies have politically worked together. Here at the Commonwealth Federation Convention the American Federation of

5 Mary Heaton Vorce, Labor's New Millions (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938), p. 276

Labor had 103 representatives while the Committee for Industrial Organization had 104. (6)

In Detroit there was a vivid contrast to this cooperative attitude of labor. Here both the Committee for Industrial Organization and the American Federation of Labor were supporting different candidates. Here the latter's candidate in the city primaries ran far behind the former's. But it was almost universally true that elsewhere labor worked together to advance a common candidate.

Why was it that the New Deal and labor's interests coincided so well in the political scene? There was no absolute harmony, but there was at least a measure of similarity in their aims. "Essentially the New Deal and the Committee for Industrial Organization are politico-economic twins, with a common heritage but different temperaments." (7) Both of these institutions came out of the capitalistic crisis facing America. Never before had society been so dependent upon the political and social power of labor. Without its support democracy could not truly exist. Entrenched financial interests were forcing the government into patterns favorable to themselves,

6 Ibid., p. 277

7 J. Raymond Walsh, C.I.O. Industrial Unionism in Action (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1937), p. 249.

and were only awaiting the opportune moment wherein they could control the legislative arm as well as the courts. Roosevelt was aware of the value of a strong labor movement as a check against excessive capitalistic interests. Unconsciously or consciously he was checking fascist aggression. To accomplish his end of liberalizing capitalism he needed the union's strength back of him. Thus it was that these widely different individuals, Roosevelt and Lewis, were found working together for common political aims.

The leader for the Committee for Industrial Organization knew that the New Deal's promises to the laborer were so much verbage unless the voice of labor was united to enforce its wish through the use of the ballot. So it was that Lewis attempted through the Non-Partisan League and other political organizations to make this voice articulate and audible in the Executive Mansion and in the houses of Congress.

The American Federation of Labor in contrast was a purely economic enterprise. It was very much like a large industrial concern when it came to politics, it gave its support to both parties; helping this or that candidate as it happened to aid their cause. As far as successfully aiding labor's desires or shaping politics it was hardly important. It made very little impression. Almost any large manufacturer's lobby or utility organization's contact men were more influential in shaping the political mold.

Under the Committee for Industrial Organization labor has become politically conscious. The result has been a tremendous opening into the hitherto impregnable fortress of political privilege. Labor was coming into its own under industrial unionism. It had found its political power.

Whether or not this will lead to a third party movement is difficult to say. Here and there are small beginnings, but as yet nothing has occurred which points to a definite labor party as such. Should the Democratic Party vacillate or drift too far from the major objectives labor seeks then perhaps the movement will take on a labor party formula, rather than merely a pressure formula.

At the 1937 Convention in Atlantic City the Committee for Industrial Organization promoted the following legislative program:

- (1) A bill establishing a State Labor Relations Board to prevent unfair labor practices.
- (2) A bill limiting authority of the courts to issue injunctions in labor disputes.
- (3) A bill prohibiting evictions of persons who are unemployed and involved in labor disputes.
- (4) A bill protecting civil liberties and prohibiting any local laws which may interfere with the free exercise of such civil liberties.
- (5) A bill limiting and regulating appointments of deputy sheriffs and prohibiting payment by private corporations for deputy sheriffs.
- (6) A bill limiting and regulating the activities of private detectives, private police and private guards.

(7) A bill incorporating collective bargaining provisions in contracts between the State and private individuals.

(8) A bill protecting the payment of wages by employers to employees.

Foreseeing increased unemployment in the major industries, with layoffs already placing the burden of a recession squarely upon labor, the C. I. O. proposed a four-point legislative program to further union organization and to insure each worker his right to a job:

1. That all business engaged in interstate commerce be obliged to comply with a code protecting the rights of labor guaranteed under the laws of the United States.

2. That federal wage and hour legislation be enacted, which would include a basic minimum wage and a maximum hours clause, designed to guarantee a decent standard of living.

3. That the federal government recognize the right of every worker to have a job and enlarge the W. P. A. and P. W. A., to provide for those workers now deprived of their jobs in industry. That special legislation be enacted to promote education for the youth of this country.

4. That the federal social security laws be amended and enlarged. (8)

8 Mary Heaton Vorce, Labor's New Millions, (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938), pp. 282-83.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME CULTURAL PATTERN OF MODERN LABOR

Many of the techniques which are dealt with here were used in the labor picture years ago. But in recent times these methods have become a more integral part of labor's advance. They have ceased to become merely sporadic acts of local units, or mere chance techniques of the moment, but have become a set part of the social life of the labor movement. Labor has matured. Its methods are becoming crystallized into specific and accepted forms.

One of the most interesting trends is the cultural one. More and more labor leaders, artists, and workmen are coming together in their mutual interests. Plays are being written, not only by professional writers but by the workers themselves which depict their problems in a most human way. What is true of the pen is true of brush and charcoal. Posters, handbills, pictorial statistics, newspapers, and other mediums of information all carry cartoons, drawings or paintings which show graphically the need labor desires to express to its constituency and to the public at large.

One of the finest examples of the use of the play is the production Pins and Needles by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in 1937-38. This brilliant show did much to create morale and strength in union ranks and to create

favorable public opinion. (1)

Mary Heaton Vorce and Josephine Herbst produced a living newspaper presentation called Labor Marches On. It was acted out in Flint, Michigan, during the automobile strike. The workers were so enthused with this production that they wrote and put on another play entitled, A Day in Front of Fisher One.

(2)

Newspapers have long been a weapon used by labor unions but never so effectively and so consistently as in recent years. The People's Press and The CIO News were probably the most successfully produced sheets in modern labor news. They have given official endorsement by many of labor's leaders, and are read in practically all of the Committee for Industrial Organization Unions. They keep the worker constantly posted as to the condition of Labor's cause throughout the country, and in a smaller way, throughout the world.

Workers' education is taking on a much more definite form of activity than ever before. It is here that the Committee has been weakest. Yet many labor leaders, realizing the utter necessity of intelligently directed masses, are beginning to develop labor classes in connection with their unions. Often

1 Mary Heaton Vorce, Labor's New Millions (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938) pp. 235-36.

2 Ibid., p. 236

these classes will be simply for the employees, but in some instances the laborer's children will also be given instruction. Again, a ladies auxiliary may conduct a course for its members. Thus, whole families become conscious of the place they take in society and the meaning of their work, and their livelihood, and their wellbeing in relation to the whole social scheme.

By educating the laborer he becomes realistic in his approach to his problem. He ceases to be romantically moved from one extreme to another. He is disciplined. In the modern situation no union can long exist that has not educated its workers to a discipline and intelligent viewpoint of his struggle.

The worker must understand more realistically his relationship to the economic scene. Such an intelligent outlook can only be accomplished when the worker has been taught labor history, industrial methods, government, sabotage as practiced by the employer, law and legal precedents, methods of organizing and conducting a union, labor in foreign countries, and parliamentary law. These and other courses illustrate the educational means of developing discipline and intelligent unions.

Some places, such as in the South where workers have been very ignorant about mathematics, reading, and the most elemental studies, the union sometimes takes upon itself the responsibility of teaching the farmer or worker these basic

studies. The southern tenent farmers were especially in need of arithmetic. The owners were cheating them on their purchases and advances in the " controlled stores " as well as in their work. Mathematics, of course, helped the farmer detect this thievery.

The Auto Workers have been unusually adept at the use of education. They have stressed this side of the labor movement from the very beginning of their organizational work. Contrariwise, in a great many unions this activity is still a matter of happenstance rather than a well planned attack against ignorance. Paul Fisher, regional director of the Southern Ohio district of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, has done a masterful piece of work. It has been entirely through his own initiative and interest, and not through a policy adapted by the union at large. (3)

Propaganda is becoming increasingly a necessity in union activity. There must be a concerted effort, and an intelligent program inaugurated, to educate the public about labor's story and condition. The National Labor Relations Board and the La Follette Committee have opened up many of the unjust practices employed by the employers of labor. The newspapers, however, do not give space to these reports. The facts are hidden from the general public. Labor is now taking upon itself

3 Ibid., p. 227

the task of molding public opinion in the same manner that the manufacturer has. They tell the story of the vigilant groups organized by the police on behalf of the employers. They write and broadcast news about armed industrialism. They circulate information about strike breaking activities and agencies. Wherever they can the unions are uncovering before the Public the unfair tactics of the opposition.

The evidence of this increased propaganda is manifested in magazines, the labor press, and in the general press to a small degree. The radio has also been used. This was especially true in textile strike of 1936 when labor hired time on the air to tell the truth about their struggle.

Propaganda is often popularized by the use of posters carried in strikes. A clever technique has been built up which sentimentalizes the situation the striker and his family face. One example will suffice to illustrate the powerful use of suggestion utilized. At a recent strike which occurred at the Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company's plants at Thompsonville, Connecticut, and Amsterdam, New York, one of the popular posters carried these words:

Ten Per Cent less Food FOR ME

The Bankers Must Have Six Per Cent (4)

Children and families were on the picket line, and carried such placards as here mentioned. Such tactics have their effect upon the other workers, and help to develop morale.

Rather akin, but yet a different phase of education, are the research departments set up by strong unions. The purpose of such a department is to study and keep on hand information relative to the industry in which their members are interested. Such research organizations are not new. Many of the older and stronger unions of the past have had them, but it is becoming more and more a regular part of modern union organization. Such departments study the income, the dividends paid, and the general condition of the plants which concern them. Such information may be vital in deciding the advisability of a strike, or actually may result in a victory for the union.

. The vital part research can play is illustrated by the following story, an instance when the fate of a strike depended on a piece of information. In 1912, in the textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the outcome of the strike swung in the balance. The union resources were almost exhausted. The union was ready to capitulate. A friendly reporter happened to find out that the American Woolen Company was trying to float a new bond issue. They were going to the women of New England, but these conservative investors had already been impressed with Professor Vida Scudder's words, to the effect that if the women of New England knew the conditions under which the woollen workers lived and the consequent toll of human life, they would never buy another yard of cloth until conditions had been remedied. (5)

5 Mary Heaton Vorce, Labor's New Millions (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1938), pp. 223-24.

Facts saved the strike. But in this case it was mere chance that the workers discovered them, and so could take advantage of the employer's critical condition. A modern industrial union, though, does not risk chance. Its Research Department knows the conditions before and while the strike is on.

So it is, with the rising class consciousness of labor, a definite cultural pattern is taking form. This is much more clearly developed in many European countries than in America, but, nevertheless, the pattern is now discernable and time will further develop it.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Briefly, these facts are discernable: Labor is having a rebirth, a new beginning. In somewhat more than three years a new and militant spirit has swept like a flood across the country. Today the Committee for Industrial Organization has more than four million members. Even the American Federation of Labor has greatly increased under the stimulation of the oppositional unions and the passage of the National Labor Relations Act. But the American Federation of Labor, as we have known it, is on the way out. Industrial unionism gives every evidence of arriving to stay. Craft unionism can survive only in those industries where crafts still hold a possible majority of workers or at least a strong minority. Big business finds itself up against a new kind of an attack from labor. Thus new business tactics are emerging. Some men are actually turning favorably toward accepting contracts with industrial unions. Such was the opinion of the executives of the United States Steel Corporation. Labor is transforming government policy. Labor is receiving new considerations at the hands of the government. It is affecting law and police procedure. The whole system of labor and government is in a flux. Government and industry are acting in a far different way than they behaved only a few years ago.

Business is trying to use the labor civil war as a weapon, and in doing so may bring the warring factions together in a united front against a common enemy. Actually this is slowly happening. The tremendous power thus realized is dangerous. The political power of labor may be dangerous. The youthfulness and inexperience of the Committee for Industrial Organization may bring evil consequences. So, perhaps, here is the beginning of a new kind of labor-capital relationship which will be far more mature and wise than the old familiar bickering of the past. Maybe a new economic order is emerging which shall soon take birth through the political power of the masses or the reactionary dictatorship of the few. These days are dangerous and require an alert and eager mind, a brave spirit and a hopeful attitude. Man has always found a way, sometimes by the circuitous route of sorrow and pain and then again through the sane route of reason and enlightenment. May it be the latter course in our day.

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